# Section 1 - Introduction

The State Advisory Council for Gifted and Talented Education and the Kentucky Department of Education have jointly created a GT Coordinator Handbook to aid in the implementation of the gifted and talented services districts provide to Kentucky students.

**Section Includes:**

- Giftedness and the Gifted: What's It All About?
- Kentucky White Paper on Gifted Education
  *Kentucky's Future: Mining Untapped Treasure - Children and Youth of the Commonwealth Who Are Gifted and Talented*
- NAGC Gifted Program Standards
- Common Myths
- Some Myths About Gifted Children
- Myths and Realities
- Frequently Used Terms

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# Giftedness and the Gifted: What's It All About?

This article defines giftedness and characteristics associated with gifted learners. Unfortunately, there are many misconceptions of the term, all of which become deterrents to understanding the needs of gifted children.

**What Does Giftedness Mean?**

Many parents say, "I know what giftedness is, but I can't put it into words." This generally is followed by reference to a particular child who seems to manifest gifted behaviors. Unfortunately, there are many misconceptions of the term, all of which become deterrents to understanding and catering to the needs of children identified as gifted. Let's study the following statement:

> "Giftedness is that precious endowment of potentially outstanding abilities which allows a person to interact with the environment with remarkably high levels of achievement and creativity."

This statement is the product of a small neighborhood group of parents who took a comprehensive view of the concept of giftedness before focusing on any attempt to define the gifted child. They thought, first, that within giftedness is a quality of innateness (or, as they said, "a gift conferred by nature"), and second, that one's environment is the arena in which the gifts come into play and develop. Therefore, they reasoned that the "remarkably high levels of achievement and creativity" result from a continuous and functional interaction between a person's inherent and acquired abilities and characteristics.

We often hear statements such as "She's a born artist," or "He's a natural athlete," or conversely, "Success never came easy for me; I had to learn the hard way," or "He's a self-made man." Those who manifest giftedness obviously have some inherent or inborn factors plus the motivation and stamina to learn from and cope with the rigors of living.

We suggest that you wrestle with the term in your own way, looking at giftedness as a concept that demands the investment of time, money, and energy. This will help you discuss giftedness more meaningfully with other parents, school administrators, school board members, or anyone who needs to understand the dynamics of the term.

**Who Are Gifted Children?**

Former U. S. Commissioner of Education Sidney P. Marland, Jr., in his August 1971 report to Congress, stated,

> "Gifted and talented children are those identified by professionally qualified persons who by virtue of outstanding abilities are capable of high performance. These are children who require differentiated educational programs and/or services beyond those normally provided by the regular school program in order to realize their contribution to self and society" (Marland, 1972).

The same report continued:

> "Children capable of high performance include those with demonstrated achievement and/or potential ability in any of the following areas, singly or in combination:
>
> - general intellectual ability
> - specific academic aptitude
> - creative or productive thinking
> - leadership ability
> - visual or performing arts
> - psychomotor ability."

Using a broad definition of giftedness, a school system could expect to identify 10% to 15% or more of its student population as gifted and talented. A brief description of each area of giftedness or talent as defined by the Office of

Gifted and Talented will help you understand this definition.

*General intellectual ability or talent.* Laypersons and educators alike usually define this in terms of a high intelligence test score--usually two standard deviations above the mean--on individual or group measures. Parents and teachers often recognize students with general intellectual talent by their wide-ranging fund of general information and high levels of vocabulary, memory, abstract word knowledge, and abstract reasoning.

*Specific academic aptitude or talent.* Students with specific academic aptitudes are identified by their outstanding performance on an achievement or aptitude test in one area such as mathematics or language arts. The organizers of talent searches sponsored by a number of universities and colleges identify students with specific academic aptitude who score at the 97th percentile or higher on standard achievement tests and then give these students the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT). Remarkably large numbers of students score at these high levels.

*Creative and productive thinking*. This is the ability to produce new ideas by bringing together elements usually thought of as independent or dissimilar and the aptitude for developing new meanings that have social value. Characteristics of creative and productive students include openness to experience, setting personal standards for evaluation, ability to play with ideas, willingness to take risks, preference for complexity, tolerance for ambiguity, positive self-image, and the ability to become submerged in a task. Creative and productive students are identified through the use of tests such as the Torrance Test of Creative Thinking or through demonstrated creative performance.

*Leadership ability*. Leadership can be defined as the ability to direct individuals or groups to a common decision or action. Students who demonstrate giftedness in leadership ability use group skills and negotiate in difficult situations. Many teachers recognize leadership through a student's keen interest and skill in problem solving. Leadership characteristics include self-confidence, responsibility, cooperation, a tendency to dominate, and the ability to adapt readily to new situations. These students can be identified through instruments such as the Fundamental Interpersonal Relations Orientation Behavior (FIRO-B).

*Visual and performing arts.* Gifted students with talent in the arts demonstrate special talents in visual art, music, dance, drama, or other related studies. These students can be identified by using task descriptions such as the Creative Products Scales, which were developed for the Detroit Public Schools by Patrick Byrons and Beverly Ness Parke of Wayne State University.

*Psychomotor ability.* This involves kinesthetic motor abilities such as practical, spatial, mechanical, and physical skills. It is seldom used as a criterion in gifted programs.

**Other Viewpoints**

Robert Sternberg and Robert Wagner (1982) have suggested that giftedness is a kind of mental self-management. The mental management of one's life in a constructive, purposeful way has three basic elements: adapting to environments, selecting new environments, and shaping environments. According to Sternberg and Wagner, the key psychological basis of intellectual giftedness resides in insight skills that include three main processes: (1) separating relevant from irrelevant information, (2) combining isolated pieces of information into a unified whole, and (3) relating newly acquired information to information acquired in the past.

Sternberg and Wagner emphasized problem-solving abilities and viewed the gifted student as one who processes information rapidly and uses insight abilities. Howard Gardner (1983) also suggested a concept of multiple intelligences, stating that there are several ways of viewing the world: linguistic, logical/mathematical, spatial, musical, bodily-kinesthetic, interpersonal, and intrapersonal intelligence.

Joseph Renzulli (1986) stated that gifted behavior reflects an interaction among three basic clusters of human traits: above-average general and/or specific abilities, high levels of task commitment (motivation), and high levels of creativity. According to Renzulli, gifted and talented children are those who possess or are capable of developing this composite of traits and applying them to any potentially valuable area of human performance.

A good source for pursuing the characteristics of giftedness in depth is Barbara Clark's informative book, GROWING UP GIFTED (1988), which presents an exhaustive list of characteristics under five major headings: Cognitive (thinking), Affective (feeling), Physical, Intuitive, and Societal. No one child manifests all of the attributes described by researchers and the Office of Gifted and Talented. Nevertheless, it is important for parents to

be fully aware of the ways in which giftedness can be recognized. Often, certain behaviors such as constantly having unique solutions to problems, asking endless, probing questions, or even the masterful manipulation of others are regarded by parents as unnatural, unlike other children, and trying to parental patience. Therefore, our recommendation is to study the characteristics of gifted children with an open mind. Do not use the list as a scorecard; simply discuss and appreciate the characteristics and let common sense, coupled with love, take over.

**Some General Characteristics**
(These are typical factors stressed by educational authorities as being indicative of giftedness. Obviously, no child is outstanding in all characteristics.)

1. Shows superior reasoning powers and marked ability to handle ideas; can generalize readily from specific facts and can see subtle relationships; has outstanding problem-solving ability.
2. Shows persistent intellectual curiosity; asks searching questions; shows exceptional interest in the nature of man and the universe.
3. Has a wide range of interests, often of an intellectual kind; develops one or more interests to considerable depth.
4. Is markedly superior in quality and quantity of written and/or spoken vocabulary; is interested in the subtleties of words and their uses.
5. Reads avidly and absorbs books well beyond his or her years.
6. Learns quickly and easily and retains what is learned; recalls important details, concepts and principles; comprehends readily.
7. Shows insight into arithmetical problems that require careful reasoning and grasps mathematical concepts readily.
8. Shows creative ability or imaginative expression in such things as music, art, dance, drama; shows sensitivity and finesse in rhythm, movement, and bodily control.
9. Sustains concentration for lengthy periods and shows outstanding responsibility and independence in classroom work.
10. Sets realistically high standards for self; is self-critical in evaluating and correcting his or her own efforts.
11. Shows initiative and originality in intellectual work; shows flexibility in thinking and considers problems from a number of viewpoints.
12. Observes keenly and is responsive to new ideas.
13. Shows social poise and an ability to communicate with adults in a mature way.
14. Gets excitement and pleasure from intellectual challenge; shows an alert and subtle sense of humor.

**A Quick Look At Intelligence**
The attempts to define giftedness refer in one way or another to so-called "inborn" attributes, which, for lack of a better term, are called intelligence.

Significant efforts have been made to measure intelligence, but, because the concept is elusive, test constructors simply aim at testing what they feel are typical manifestations of intelligence in behaviors. Perhaps a little rhyme used for years by kindergarten teachers will help to describe this elusiveness:

"Nobody sees the wind; neither you, nor I. But when the trees bow down their heads, the wind is passing by."

Just as we cannot see the wind, we cannot find, operate on, or transplant intelligence. Yet we see the working or manifestations of intelligence in the behaviors of people.

The man-made computation of an intelligence quotient, or IQ, is probably the best general indicator of intelligence, but in no way is it infallible. All too often, a child's IQ is misunderstood and becomes a lifelong "handle." However, given our present knowledge, the results of a standardized intelligence test administered by a competent examiner provide as reliable an indication as possible of a person's potential ability to learn and cope. Until some scientific breakthrough is developed, we will rely on the IQ score to approximate how mentally gifted a person may be.

The nature of intelligence was once explained in this way:

If intelligence were something you could see, touch, and weigh, it would be something like a can of paint. The genius would have a gallon, the person who has severe retardation, only half a pint. The rest of us would have varying amounts between these extremes, with the majority possessing about two quarts. This is clear enough, but it is only half the story.

Each can of paint contains the same five or six ingredients in varying amounts. One can may be "long" on oil, another on pigment, a third on turpentine, the fourth on gloss or drying agent. So, although two cans contain the same amount of paint, the paint may be of vastly different consistency, color, or character.

Good painters want to know the elements in the paint with which they are working. Parents and teachers want to know the kinds of intelligence with which they are working. What are the special qualities of this intelligence? In what proportions are these elements present? Most important, how can these elements be used?

We recommend that you do not become bogged down in probing into the concept of intelligence. Its intricacies and mysteries are fascinating, but it must not become a convenient synonym for giftedness. An excellent coverage of the concept of intelligence is provided by Barbara Clark in GROWING UP GIFTED.

The exciting advances in research on brain functioning, coupled with the realization that a child's intelligence is only one key to understanding giftedness, have underscored the importance of studying all characteristics of the gifted child.

**The Gifted Child Is Called Many Things**

Often parents are confused by the many terms used in referring to the gifted child. Many parents hear these terms used--sometimes adopting them in their own conversations--without knowing whether they are synonymous with "gifted" or are just words that help to explain the concept.

The term "genius" used to be widely employed but now it is reserved for reference only to the phenomenally gifted person. "Talented" tends to be used when referring to a particular strength or ability of a person. Thought should be given to whether the talent is truly a gift or is, rather, an ability that has become a highly developed skill through practice. It is safe to say that generally the person identified as gifted is one who has multiple talents of a high order.

The terms "prodigy" and "precocious" are most commonly used when a child evidences a decidedly advanced degree of skill in a particular endeavor at a very early age, as well as a very disciplined type of motivation. It is interesting to note that the derivation of the words precocious or precocity comes from the ancient Greek word for "precooked" and connotes the idea of early ripening.

"Superior" is a comparative term. When a child is classified as "superior," we would like to know to whom, or what group, he or she is superior, and to what degree. A child may be markedly superior to the majority of children in a specific mental ability such as verbal comprehension and at the same time be equally inferior in spatial relations or memory. The looseness of the term limits its usage in most cases to broad generalization. A "high IQ" may be anything, depending on what it is higher than.

"Rapid learner" is a helpful term in understanding giftedness, because it is a distinct characteristic manifested by the identified gifted child.

The term "exceptional" is appropriate when referring to the gifted child as being different in the characteristics listed earlier.

At this point it is important to bring into focus a term that continues to be tossed around altogether too loosely in reference to education of the gifted. That term is "elitism."

By derivation, elite means the choice, or best, or superior part of a body or class of persons. However, time and an overemphasis on egalitarianism have imparted a negative connotation to the word, implying snobbishness, selectivity, and unfair special attention.

But in fact, gifted children are elite in the same way that anyone becomes a champion, a record-holder, a soloist, an inventor, or a leader in important realms of human endeavor. Therefore, their parents have a distinct responsibility to challenge those who cry "elitism" and explain to them the true meaning of the term.

The only reason for mentioning these terms--and there are many more--is to caution parents that semantics and language usage can be tricky and confusing. Thus, your personal understanding and application of the term gifted becomes doubly important.

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# KENTUCKY'S FUTURE:
# MINING UNTAPPED TREASURE
# CHILDREN AND YOUTH OF THE COMMONWEALTH
# WHO ARE GIFTED AND TALENTED

## Benjamin Franklin wisely noted:
## "Genius without education is like silver in the mine."

**AN URGENT NEED**

Before the Kentucky Education Reform Act (KERA), students who were gifted and talented were recognized as a group with special needs. Since 1978 and the first competitive gifted education grants, Kentucky legislators have recognized the importance of appropriate education for gifted students. Then in 1990 gifted children were designated a category of exceptional children in the Commonwealth. As defined in KRS 157.200, these exceptional children can be identified in five areas: general intellectual aptitude, academic aptitude in a specific content area (e.g., mathematics, science), creativity, leadership, or in the visual or performing arts. Thus, since 1990, districts have been responsible for identifying and serving children in five areas of giftedness. Kentucky has created a strong infrastructure for educating students. KERA, coupled with the Federal No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB), pledged to provide appropriate educational opportunities to **all** students. Still, a gap remains between established KERA and NCLB goals and what happens daily in Kentucky schools, especially for children who are gifted and talented. The requirements are in place; now comprehensive implementation is needed.

**"You don't prepare a young man or woman to become a world class athlete by keeping him or her in regular gym classes and by not allowing him or her to compete against other youngsters who can provide appropriate levels of challenge…. You don't develop world leaders such as Martin Luther King, Golda Meir, and Mahatma Gandhi by having them practice basic skills over and over again or by reiterating mundane concepts that they can undoubtedly learn faster than all their schoolmates and, in some cases, even many of their teachers. Talent development is the 'business' of our field, and we must never lose sight of this goal."**
***Renzulli & Reis, (2005) National Research Center on the Gifted and Talented***

To mine the future treasures that Kentucky's gifted and talented children possess, the Commonwealth must commit the tools to develop their extraordinary potential. Kentucky must fund gifted education at a level so that the state's students get the important educational opportunities promised them.

This position paper grew out of the urgent need for additional Gifted and Talented Education funding. Increased funding is crucial for:

1. Ongoing professional development for teachers,
2. Comprehensive identification of gifted students, and

**In China, 39% of all students are studying engineering, compared to just 5% in the United States.**
***The TechNet Innovative Initiative, 2005***

**"We're at a crossroads. We still have the best system of higher education in the world, but the world is catching up. China graduates six times as many engineering majors as the U.S.; Japan and South Korea, four times as many."**
***Margaret Spellings, U.S. Secretary of Education, 2005***

Innovation and economic growth are critically linked to educating Kentucky's children to their fullest potential, including those children who are gifted and talented. Kentucky ranked 47**th** out of the 50 states in the number of scientists and engineers produced. Kentucky dropped from 41**st** to 45**th** in the number of patents received (an indicator of innovative and creative ideas). Moreover, Kentucky dropped from 39**th** to 42**nd** for overall adaptation to The New Economy (The New Economy Index, 2002, the most recent information available). Kentucky can and must reverse this direction. Industry seeks locations with a qualified talent pool and an optimistic economic outlook; Kentucky needs to improve in those dimensions.

**"Everyone is looking for the same talent pool. If you don't pay attention to the pool, and you're not really building it up and encouraging the pool to grow, you'll end up with people out of the state coming to take jobs that could be offered to Kentuckians. Often I go out of state because I can't get the engineers that I need in Kentucky."**
***Wil Cooksey, Corvette Plant Manager, Bowling Green, KY***

Mining the untapped treasure of Kentucky's gifted and talented young people is key to reversing this trend. Establishing a strong educational system for **all** children, including Kentucky's gifted children, will become the ace card for industries seeking new places to locate, qualified employees, and high quality educational opportunities for their employees' families. Kentucky's greatest resource isn't coal … or horses … or tobacco but our bright young people … with minds capable of solving long standing problems in innovative ways. To hold them back because of inadequate educational opportunity is to hold Kentucky back. Kentucky's future depends upon developing this valuable resource.

**"Schools pay lip-service to the proposition that students should learn at their own pace; in reality, for countless highly able children the pace of their progress through school is determined by the rate of progress of their classmates. In the majority of our classrooms, an invisible ceiling restricts the progress of academically gifted students."**
***A Nation Deceived: How Schools Hold Back America's Brightest Students, 2004***

The evidence for giving priority to gifted education is compelling:

- ¶ Funding gifted education in Kentucky has remained stagnant since 1987 (Kentucky Association for Gifted Education, 2005; KDE, 2005). Since that time, the salary of a teacher with a Rank II and ten years' experience has risen from $23,350 to $47,576.
- ¶ According to the KDE video *It's in Your Best Interest*, 20% of gifted and talented children scored novice or apprentice: a significant achievement gap between performance and potential.
- ¶ Children who are gifted and talented and who receive quality services have higher achievement test scores, higher high school graduation rates, and higher college graduation rates (Rogers, 2002; Kulik, 1992; Tieso, 2002; Colangelo, Assouline, & Gross, 2004).
- ¶ Gifted and talented elementary students have already mastered from 35-50 percent of the curriculum to be offered in five basic subjects before they even begin the school year (Reis & Purcell, 1993, *National Research Center on the Gifted and Talented*).

¶ U.S. students learn elementary topics in middle school (arithmetic, descriptive biology, and earth science.) International middle school students learn algebra, geometry, chemistry, and physics (*Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study [TIMSS]*).

¶ "Tennessee Value-Added Assessment System data have shown that some schools and indeed some school systems have successfully addressed the needs of all students as evidenced by their ability to consistently show normal – and sometimes exceptional – academic progress for students of all academic abilities. However, statewide aggregated evidence suggests students at the highest levels of achievement show somewhat less academic growth from year to year than their lower-achieving peers" (Sanders & Horn, 1998).

## 1. ONGOING PROFESSIONALDEVELOPMENT

**A national survey of professional development practices in gifted education indicated that districts spend only 4% of their professional development budget on gifted education, including classroom practices.**
***Westburg, Burns, Gubbins, Reis, Park, & Maxfield, (1998)***
***National Research Center on the Gifted and Talented***

Most classroom teachers and school administrators have very little or no training in meeting and identifying the unique learning needs of gifted students. Funding for on-going professional development for all Kentucky teachers provides essential tools:

¶ Most students who are gifted and talented spend most of their time in regular classrooms, so all teachers working with them must recognize their advanced abilities and know how to modify the curriculum and teaching to challenge them.

¶ In February, 2005, Kentucky accreditation standards required preparation of preservice teachers in meeting the needs of a diverse population of students, including gifted and talented children. Professional development is needed to bring Kentucky's 42,683 teachers to this standard.

¶ Research in 1993 indicated that most teachers use one lesson plan to teach a diverse group of students. Ten years later, the results are the same in spite of the fact that the one-size-fits-all approach to teaching is ineffective (Archambault, Westberg, Brown, Zhang, & Emmons, 1993; Westburg & Daoust, 2003).

¶ Gifted learners need to be served by professionals who have specialized preparation in gifted education (*The Gifted Program Standards*, 1998). NCLB goals require highly qualified teachers for every student. That includes teachers who can address the needs of gifted students.

¶ Teachers play a vital role in the identification of students with gifts and talents. Teachers without training tend to overlook disadvantaged, underachieving, and culturally different gifted and talented students (Shack & Starko, 1990; Peterson & Margolin, 1997).

Increased funding is needed so that all Kentucky teachers have access to high quality professional development tools to mine the untapped treasures of gifted students.

## 2. COMPREHENSIVE IDENTIFICATION

**Identification will remain a critical issue in developing the gifts and talents of young people as long as funding remains stagnant. Districts must have the financial resources to develop Kentucky's natural resources – children who are gifted and talented from all five areas including those from underrepresented populations; otherwise, Kentucky loses treasures as they remain unmined.**

Problems in identifying children who are gifted and talented plague the Commonwealth:

- ¶ Kentucky requires identification in five areas, but typically only the specific academic aptitude and general intellectual ability are identified consistently across the Commonwealth. The areas of leadership, creativity, and the visual and performing arts are not adequately identified due to insufficient professional development and fiscal resources.
- ¶ Significant achievement gaps exist across all populations. Likewise, giftedness cuts across those same populations, including children who are economically disadvantaged, ethnically diverse, learning the English language (LEP), and/or managing a disability. These children are Kentucky's "unmined silver."
- ¶ Kentucky's minority gifted and talented young people comprise only 8% of those formally identified for services. Ideally identification should echo the 15.6% minority population in Kentucky schools (The Gifted and Talented End-of-the-Year Report, 2006-2007).
- ¶ Underidentification occurs also with those students from low socio-economic backgrounds. Fifty percent of Kentucky's students qualify for free and/or reduced lunch while only 8% of those identified as gifted and talented qualify for free and/or reduced lunch. (The Gifted and Talented End-of-the-Year Report, 2006-2007).
- ¶ Kentucky lacks expertise in identifying and developing talent in children with multi-exceptionalities (such as giftedness plus a learning disability, ADHD, or deafness). Of the total population of students with IEPs, 4.5% were identified for gifted services (The Gifted and Talented End-of-the-Year Report, 2006-2007).
- ¶ The number of K-3 children selected for Primary Talent Pool services represents a mere fraction (average 13%) of the expected 25% recommended by Kentucky Regulations (The Gifted and Talented End-of-the-Year Report, 2006-2007).

**3. APPROPRIATE SERVICES**

**Gifted students don't look needy because their needs are created by their strengths.**
**Reality finds these needs to be every bit as intense as the needs of other exceptional children.**
***Dr. Julia Roberts, Director, The Center for Gifted Studies, Western Kentucky University;***
***Named one of the most influential people in the history of the field of gifted education***

All stakeholders must team to meet the individual needs of students. Just as precious metals may be mined in a variety of ways, so too are gifted children's talents developed in myriad services. Much must be taken into consideration when matching services to the child:

- ¶ *A Nation Deceived: How America Holds Back Its Brightest Students* lists 18 types of acceleration ranging from continuous progress to curriculum compacting, from early admission to subject-matter acceleration. Acceleration "is strongly supported by decades of research, yet the policy implications of that research are widely ignored by the wider educational community…. The research on acceleration is expansive and consistent; and we are not aware of any other educational practice that is so well researched, yet so rarely implemented."
- ¶ K-12 children require rigorous curriculum. Rigor is learning that is personally challenging to the learner - both in the depth of content and in complexity of thought. A single level of rigor will not challenge each student.
- ¶ "There is overwhelming evidence that gifted students simply do not succeed on their own" (DeLacy, 2004, p. 40).
- ¶ The gifted child's strength becomes the need that should drive the response from educators as the needs do in

other programs such as Head Start or bilingual programs. The needs of gifted students differ significantly from other students. The needs arise from gifted children's strengths – their ability to learn at a significantly faster pace and their hunger for advanced, complex curricula.

- ¶ The brain changes physically and chemically when challenged (Sousa, 2002). Clark (2002) argues that "environmental stimulation strengthen(s) the brain at the cellular level, leading to enhanced ability to learn and create" (p. 50).
- ¶ Grouping must be done for instructional purposes for gifted children (704 KAR 3:285).
- ¶ Schools must provide a variety of service options at each grade level K-12 (704 KAR 3:285).

**URGENT NEED CALLSFOR ACTION**

Gifted children are an invaluable Kentucky resource whose gifts and talents must be recognized and then nurtured for their futures and for the sake of the Commonwealth. From this mine of bright innovative students come the creative and critical thinkers that Kentucky needs for economic growth in new directions. Providing gifted students with challenging educational opportunities to match their thirst for learning shows them that Kentucky cares for all students. Later, as adults, they will think of Kentucky as a good place to live and work. Kentucky will benefit tremendously from the creativity, drive, and intellectual capital these adults who are gifted and talented will contribute to the state.

**Make the United States the most attractive setting in which to study, perform research, and commercialize technologic innovation so that we can develop, recruit, and retain the best and brightest students, scientists, and engineers from within the United States and throughout the world.**
***Rising Above the Gathering Storm: Energizing and Employing America for a Brighter Economic Future, 2005***

The state allocation for gifted and talented education acknowledges that gifted children have unique learning needs that must be addressed. The budgeted funds provide a beginning but in no way cover the full cost of professional development, identification, and appropriate services to Kentucky's gifted and talented young people. **The supporters of this white paper call for $25 million in annual state allocations, a modest beginning but an important incremental step toward improving educational opportunities for Kentucky's children who are gifted and talented.** The increased funding should remain a separate categorical item in order to be identified and used specifically for children who are gifted and talented. Without such funding, providing and maintaining services for these children, improving performance levels of gifted students, and fully developing talents would become even more difficult. Kentucky is losing future leaders, scholars, creators, and performers, as their genius lies undiscovered like Franklin's "silver in the mine."

**It is against our country's character to hold people back and prevent them from pursuing their dreams. We all benefit when schools meet the learning needs of all children.**
***A Nation Deceived: How Schools Hold Back America's Brightest Students, 2004***

# *Pre-Kindergarten - Grade 12 Gifted Program Standards*

In 1998, NAGC developed and released the *Pre-K -- Grade 12* ***Gifted Program Standards*** designed to assist school districts in examining the quality of their programming for gifted learners. Recognizing that the on-going evaluation and re-tooling of a successful gifted program is an evolutionary process, the NAGC Standards detail a framework including both *minimum standards* (nominal requirements for satisfactory programs) and *exemplary standards* (characteristics of excellence in gifted education programming).

NAGC IS IN THE PROCESS OF REVISING THE PRE K - 12 GIFTED PROGRAM STANTARDS. THE REVISED STANDARDS WILL BE AVAILABLE SEPTEMBER 2010. IF YOU ARE CURRENTLY REVISING YOUR PROGRAM BASED ON THE NAGC STANDARDS, PLEASE EMAIL AT JANEC.NAGC.ORG.

**Putting the Standards to Use**

The NAGC Pre-K -- Grade 12 **Gifted Program Standards** can serve as:

- Benchmarks for measuring the effectiveness of gifted programming;
- Criteria for program evaluation and assessment;
- Guidelines for program design and development;
- Recommendations of the minimal requirements necessary for high-quality educational programming designed to meet the needs of gifted students; and
- Tools for advocates of gifted education who are working on increasing the public's awareness of the needs of gifted and talented students in today's schools.

www.nagc.org

## Introduction

In 1998, NAGC developed and released the *Pre-K—Grade 12 Gifted Program Standards* to assist school districts in examining the quality of their programming for gifted learners. Recognizing that the ongoing evaluation and re-tooling of a successful gifted program is an evolutionary process, the NAGC Standards detail a framework including both *minimum standards* (nominal requirements for satisfactory programs) and *exemplary standards* (characteristics of excellence in gifted education programming).

To help you focus on important aspects of gifted programming, the current *Standards* are divided into seven criterion areas: Program Design, Program Administration and Management, Student Identification, Curriculum and Instruction, Socio-Emotional Guidance and Counseling, Professional Development, and Program Evaluation.

Several **organizing principles** guided the work of the task force, including:

- Standards should encourage but not dictate approaches of high quality.
- Standards represent both requisite program outcomes and standards for excellence.
- Standards establish the level of performance to which all educational school districts and agencies should aspire.
- Standards represent professional consensus on critical practice in gifted education that most everyone is likely to find acceptable.
- Standards are observable aspects of educational programming and are directly connected to the continuous growth and development of gifted learners.

For more information and guidance about using the *NAGC Pre-K—Grade 12 Gifted Program Standards*, visit www.nagc.org.



## Definitions

***Gifted learners*** are "Students, children, or youth who give evidence of high achievement capability in areas such as intellectual, creative, artistic, or leadership capacity, or in specific academic fields, and who need services and activities not ordinarily provided by the school in order to fully develop those capabilities." (*No Child Left Behind*, 2002).

***Gifted education programming*** is a coordinated and comprehensive structure of informal and formal services provided on a continuing basis intended to effectively nurture gifted learners.

***A standard*** is a criterion-based designated level of performance against which programming success is measured (Worthen, Sanders, & Fitzpatrick, 1997). The *Standards* here allow us to evaluate existing programs, compare services across schools and districts, and provide guidance for developing new programs for gifted learners. This document contains both ***minimum standards***—requisite conditions for acceptable gifted education practice and ***exemplary standards***—desirable and visionary conditions for excellence in gifted education practice.


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# Pre-K–Grade 12 Gifted Program Standards

NAGC Standards


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## Gifted Education Programming Criterion: Curriculum and Instruction

NAGC Standards

Description: Gifted education services must include curricular and instructional opportunities directed to the unique needs of the gifted learner.

| Guiding Principles | Minimum Standards | Exemplary Standards |
|---|---|---|
| 1. Differentiated curriculum for the gifted learner must span grades pre-K–12. | 1.0M Differentiated curriculum (curricular and instructional adaptations that address the unique learning needs of gifted learners) for gifted learners must be integrated and articulated throughout the district. | 1.0E A well-defined and implemented curriculum scope and sequence should be articulated for all grade levels and all subject areas. |
| 2. Regular classroom curricula and instruction must be adapted, modified, or replaced to meet the unique needs of gifted learners. | 2.0M Instruction, objectives, and strategies provided to gifted learners must be systematically differentiated from those in the regular classroom.<br>2.1M Teachers must differentiate, replace, supplement, or modify curricula to facilitate higher level learning goals.<br>2.2M Means for demonstrating proficiency in essential regular curriculum concepts and processes must be established to facilitate appropriate academic acceleration.<br>2.3M Gifted learners must be assessed for proficiency in basic skills and knowledge and provided with alternative challenging educational opportunities when proficiency is demonstrated | 2.0E District curriculum plans should include objectives, content, and resources that challenge gifted learners in the regular classroom.<br>2.1E Teachers should be responsible for developing plans to differentiate the curriculum in every discipline for gifted learners.<br>2.2E Documentation of instruction for assessing level(s) of learning and accelerated rates of learning should demonstrate plans for gifted learners based on specific needs of individual learners.<br>2.3E Gifted learners should be assessed for proficiency in all standard courses of study and subsequently provided with more challenging educational opportunities. |
| 3. Instructional pace must be flexible to allow for the accelerated learning of gifted learners as appropriate. | 3.0M A program of instruction must consist of advanced content and appropriately differentiated teaching strategies to reflect the accelerative learning pace and advanced intellectual processes of gifted learners. | 3.0E When warranted, continual opportunities for curricular acceleration should be provided in gifted learners' areas of strength and interest while allowing a sufficient ceiling for optimal learning. |
| 4. Educational opportunities for subject and grade skipping must be provided to gifted learners. | 4.0M Decisions to proceed or limit the acceleration of content and grade acceleration must only be considered after a thorough assessment. | 4.0E Possibilities for partial or full acceleration of content and grade levels should be available to any student presenting such needs. |
| 5. Learning opportunities for gifted learners must consist of a continuum of differentiated curricular options, instructional approaches, and resource materials. | 5.0M Diverse and appropriate learning experiences must consist of a variety of curricular options, instructional strategies, and materials.<br>5.1M Flexible instructional arrangements (e.g., special classes, seminars, resource rooms, mentorships, independent study, and research projects) must be available. | 5.0E Appropriate service options for each student to work at assessed level(s) and advanced rates of learning should be available.<br>5.1E Differentiated educational program curricula for students pre-K–12 should be modified to provide learning experiences matched to students' interests, readiness, and learning styles. |

## Gifted Education Programming Criterion: Program Administration and Management

Description: Appropriate gifted education programming must include the establishment of a systematic means of developing, implementing, and managing services.

| Guiding Principles | Minimum Standards | Exemplary Standards |
|---|---|---|
| 1. Appropriately qualified personnel must direct services for the education of gifted learners. | 1.0M The designated coordinator of gifted education programming must have completed coursework or staff development in gifted education and display leadership ability to be deemed appropriately qualified. | 1.0E The designated gifted programming coordinator must have completed a certification program or advanced degree program in gifted education. |
| 2. Gifted education programming must be integrated into the general education program. | 2.0M The gifted education program must create linkages between general education and gifted education at all levels. | 2.0E Responsibility for the education of gifted learners is a shared one requiring strong relationships between the gifted education program and general education school wide. |
| 3. Gifted education programming must include positive working relationships with constituency and advocacy groups, as well as with compliance agencies. | 3.0M Gifted programming staff must establish ongoing parent communication.<br>3.1M Gifted programs must establish and use an advisory committee that reflects the cultural and socio-economic diversity of the school or school district's total student population, and includes parents, community members, students, and school staff members.<br>3.2M Gifted education programming staff must communicate with other on-site departments as well as other educational agencies vested in the education of gifted learners (e.g., other school districts, school board members, state departments of education, intermediate educational agencies, etc.). | 3.0E The gifted education programming staff should facilitate the dissemination of information regarding major policies and practices in gifted education (e.g., student referral and screening, appeals, informed consent, student progress, etc.) to school personnel, parents, community members, etc.<br>3.1E Parents of gifted learners should have regular opportunities to share input and make recommendations about program operations with the gifted programming coordinator.<br>3.2E The gifted education program should consider current issues and concerns from other educational fields and agencies regarding gifted programming decision making on a regular basis. |
| 4. Requisite resources and materials must be provided to support the efforts of gifted education programming. | 4.0M Resources must be provided to support program operations.<br>4.1M Technological support must be provided for gifted education programming services.<br>4.2M The library selections must reflect a range of materials including those appropriate for gifted learners. | 4.0E A diversity of resources (e.g., parent, community, vocational, etc.) should be available to support program operations.<br>4.1E Gifted education programming should provide state-of-the-art technology to support appropriate services.<br>4.2E The acquisition plan for purchasing new materials for the school should reflect the needs of gifted learners. |

## Gifted Education Programming Criterion: Program Design

NAGC Standards

Description: The development of appropriate gifted education programming requires comprehensive services based on sound philosophical, theoretical, and empirical support.

| Guiding Principles | Minimum Standards | Exemplary Standards |
|---|---|---|
| 1. Rather than any single gifted program, a continuum of programming services must exist for gifted learners. | 1.0M Gifted programming services must be accessible to all gifted learners. | 1.0E Levels of services should be matched to the needs of gifted learners by providing a full continuum of options. |
| 2. Gifted education must be adequately funded. | 2.0M Gifted education funding should be equitable compared to the funding of other local programming. | 2.0E Gifted education programming must receive funding consistent with the program goals and sufficient to adequately meet them. |
| 3. Gifted education programming must evolve from a comprehensive and sound base. | 3.0M Gifted education programming must be submitted for outside review on a regular basis.<br>3.1M Gifted programming must be guided by a clearly articulated philosophy statement and accompanying goals and objectives.<br>3.2M A continuum of services must be provided across grades pre-K–12. | 3.0E Gifted education programming should be planned as a result of consultation with informed experts.<br>3.1E The school or school district should have a mission/ philosophy statement that addresses the need for gifted education programming.<br>3.2E A comprehensive pre-K–12 program plan should include policies and procedures for identification, curriculum and instruction, service delivery, teacher preparation, formative and summative evaluation, support services, and parent involvement. |
| 4. Gifted education programming services must be an integral part of the general education school day. | 4.0M Gifted education programming should be articulated with the general education program.<br>4.1M Appropriate educational opportunities must be provided in the regular classroom, resource classroom, separate, or optional voluntary environments. | 4.0E Gifted services must be designed to supplement and build on the basic academic skills and knowledge learned in regular classrooms at all grade levels to ensure continuity as students progress through the program.<br>4.1E Local school districts should offer multiple service delivery options as no single service should stand alone. |
| 5. Flexible groupings of students must be developed in order to facilitate differentiated instruction and curriculum. | 5.0M The use of flexible grouping of gifted learners must be an integral part of gifted education programming. | 5.0E Gifted learners should be included in flexible grouping arrangements in all content areas and grade levels to ensure that gifted students learn with and from intellectual peers. |
| 6. Policies specific to adapting and adding to the nature and operations of the general education program are necessary for gifted education. | 6.0M Existing and future school policies must include provisions for the needs of gifted learners. | 6.0E Gifted education policies should exist for at least the following areas: early entrance, grade skipping, ability grouping, and dual enrollment. |

## Gifted Education Programming Criterion: Program Evaluation

NAGC Standards

Description: Program evaluation is the systematic study of the value and impact of services provided.

| Guiding Principles | Minimum Standards | Exemplary Standards |
|---|---|---|
| 1. An evaluation must be purposeful. | 1.0M Information collected must reflect the interests and needs of most of the constituency groups. | 1.0E Information collected should address pertinent questions raised by all constituency groups, and should be responsive to the needs of all stakeholders. |
| 2. An evaluation must be efficient and economic. | 2.0M School districts must provide sufficient resources for program evaluation. | 2.0E School districts should allocate adequate time, financial support, and personnel to conduct systematic program evaluation. |
| 3. An evaluation must be conducted competently and ethically. | 3.0M Persons conducting the evaluation must be competent trustworthy.<br>3.1M The program evaluation design must address whether or not services have reached intended goals.<br>3.2M Instruments and procedures used for data collection must be valid and reliable for their intended use.<br>3.3M Ongoing formative and summative evaluation strategies must be used for substantive program improvement and development.<br>3.4M Individual data must be held confidential. | 3.0E Persons conducting the evaluation should possess an expertise in program evaluation in gifted education.<br>3.1E The evaluation design should report the strengths and weaknesses found in the program, as well as critical issues that might influence program services.<br>3.2E Care should be taken to ensure that instruments with sufficient evidence of reliability and validity are used, and that they are appropriate for varying age, developmental levels, gender, and diversity of the target population.<br>3.3E Formative evaluations should be conducted regularly with summative evaluations occurring minimally every five years or more often as specified by state or local district policies.<br>3.4E All individuals who are involved in the evaluation process should be given the opportunity to verify information and the resulting interpretation. |
| 4. The evaluation results must be made available through a written report. | 4.0M Evaluation reports must present the evaluation results in a clear and cohesive format. | 4.0E Evaluation reports should be designed to present results and encourage follow-through by stakeholders. |

## Gifted Education Programming Criterion: Socio-Emotional Guidance and Counseling

NAGC Standards

Description: Gifted education programming must establish a plan to recognize and nurture the unique socio-emotional development of gifted learners.

| Guiding Principles | Minimum Standards | Exemplary Standards |
|---|---|---|
| 1. Gifted learners must be provided with differentiated guidance efforts to meet their unique socio-emotional development. | 1.0M Gifted learners, because of their unique socio-emotional development, must be provided with guidance and counseling services by a counselor who is familiar with the characteristics and socio-emotional needs of gifted learners. | 1.0E Counseling services should be provided by a counselor familiar with specific training in the characteristics and socio-emotional needs (i.e., underachievement, multipotentiality, etc.) of diverse gifted learners. |
| 2. Gifted learners must be provided with career guidance services especially designed for their unique needs. | 2.0M Gifted learners must be provided with career guidance consistent with their unique strengths. | 2.0E Gifted learners should be provided with college and career guidance that is appropriately different and delivered earlier than typical programs. |
| 3. Gifted at-risk students must be provided with guidance and counseling to help them reach their potential. | 3.0M Gifted learners who are at risk must have special attention, counseling, and support to help them realize their full potential. | 3.0E Gifted learners who do not demonstrate satisfactory performance in regular and/or gifted education classes should be provided with specialized intervention services. |
| 4. Gifted learners must be provided with affective curriculum in addition to differentiated guidance and counseling services. | 4.0M Gifted learners must be provided with affective curriculum as part of differentiated curriculum and instructional services. | 4.0E A well-defined and implemented affective curriculum scope and sequence containing personal/social awareness and adjustment, academic planning, and vocational and career awareness should be provided to gifted learners. |
| 5. Underachieving gifted learners must be served rather than omitted from differentiated services. | 5.0M Gifted students who are underachieving must not be exited from gifted programs because of related problems. | 5.0E Underachieving gifted learners should be provided with specific guidance and counseling services that address the issues and problems related to underachievement. |

## Gifted Education Programming Criterion: Professional Development

Description: Gifted learners are entitled to be served by professionals who have specialized preparation in gifted education, expertise in appropriate differentiated content and instructional methods, involvement in ongoing professional development, and who possess exemplary personal and professional traits.

| Guiding Principles | Minimum Standards | Exemplary Standards |
|---|---|---|
| 1. A comprehensive staff development program must be provided for all school staff involved in the education of gifted learners. | 1.0M All school staff must be made aware of the nature and needs of gifted students.<br>1.1M Teachers of gifted students must attend at least one professional development activity a year designed specifically for teaching gifted learners. | 1.0E All school staff should be provided ongoing staff development in the nature and needs of gifted learners, and appropriate instructional strategies.<br>1.1E All teachers of gifted learners should continue to be actively engaged in the study of gifted education through staff development or graduate degree programs. |
| 2. Only qualified personnel should be involved in the education of gifted learners. | 2.0M All personnel working with gifted learners must be certified to teach in the areas to which they are assigned, and must be aware of the unique learning differences and needs of gifted learners at the grade level at which they are teaching.<br>2.1M All specialist teachers in gifted education must hold or be actively working toward a certification (or the equivalent) in gifted education in the state in which they teach.<br>2.2M Any teacher whose primary responsibility for teaching includes gifted learners, must have extensive expertise in gifted education. | 2.0E All personnel working with gifted learners should participate in regular staff development programs.<br>2.1E All specialist teachers in gifted education should possess a certification/specialization or degree in gifted education.<br>2.2E Only teachers with advanced expertise in gifted education should have primary responsibility for the education of gifted learners. |
| 3. School personnel require support for their specific efforts related to the education of gifted learners. | 3.0M School personnel must be released from their professional duties to participate in staff development efforts in gifted education. | 3.0E Approved staff development activities in gifted education should be funded at least in part by school districts or educational agencies. |
| 4. The educational staff must be provided with time and other support for the preparation and development of the differentiated education plans, materials, curriculum. | 4.0M School personnel must be allotted planning time to prepare for the differentiated education of gifted learners. | 4.0E Regularly scheduled planning time (e.g., release time, summer pay, etc.) should be allotted to teachers for the development of differentiated educational programs and related resources. |

## Gifted Education Programming Criterion: Student Identification

Description: Gifted learners must be assessed to determine appropriate educational services.

| Guiding Principles | Minimum Standards | Exemplary Standards |
|---|---|---|
| 1. A comprehensive and cohesive process for student nomination must be coordinated in order to determine eligibility for gifted education services. | 1.0M Information regarding the characteristics of gifted students in areas served by the district must be annually disseminated to all appropriate staff members.<br>1.1M All students must comprise the initial screening pool of potential recipients of gifted education services.<br>1.2M Nominations for services must be accepted from any source (e.g., teachers, parents, community members, peers, etc.).<br>1.3M Parents must be provided with information regarding an understanding of giftedness and student characteristics. | 1.0E The school district should provide information annually, in a variety of languages, regarding the process for nominating students for gifted education programming services.<br>1.1E The nomination process should be ongoing and screening of any student should occur at any time.<br>1.2E Nomination procedures and forms should be available in a variety of languages.<br>1.3E Parents should be provided with special workshops or seminars to gain a full meaning of giftedness. |
| 2. Instruments used for student assessment to determine eligibility for gifted education services must measure diverse abilities, talents, strengths, and needs in order to provide students an opportunity to demonstrate any strengths. | 2.0M Assessment instruments must measure the capabilities of students with provisions for the language in which the student is most fluent, when available.<br>2.1M Assessments must be culturally fair.<br>2.2M The purpose(s) of student assessments must be consistently articulated across all grade levels.<br>2.3M Student assessments must be sensitive to the current stage of talent development. | 2.0E Assessments should be provided in a language in which the student is most fluent, if available.<br>2.1E Assessment should be responsive to students' economic conditions, gender, developmental differences, handicapping conditions, and other factors that mitigate against fair assessment practices.<br>2.2E Students identified in all designated areas of giftedness within a school district should be assessed consistently across grade levels.<br>2.3E Student assessments should be sensitive to all stages of talent development. |
| 3. A student assessment profile of individual strengths and needs must be developed to plan appropriate intervention. | 3.0M An assessment profile must be developed for each child to evaluate eligibility for gifted education programming services.<br>3.1M An assessment profile must reflect the unique learning characteristics and potential and performance levels. | 3.0E Individual assessment plans should be developed for all gifted learners who need gifted education.<br>3.1E An assessment profile should reflect the gifted learner's interests, learning style, and educational needs. |
| 4. All student identification procedures and instruments must be based on current theory and research. | 4.0M No single assessment instrument or its results denies student eligibility for gifted programming services.<br>4.1M All assessment instruments must provide evidence of reliability and validity for the intended purposes and target students. | 4.0E Student assessment data should come from multiple sources and include multiple assessment methods.<br>4.1E Student assessment data should represent an appropriate balance of reliable and valid quantitative and qualitative measures. |
| 5. Written procedures for student identification must include, at the very least, provisions for informed consent, student retention, student reassessment, student exiting, and appeals procedures. | 5.0M District gifted programming guidelines must contain specific procedures for student assessment at least once during the elementary, middle, and secondary levels.<br>5.1M District guidelines must provide specific procedures for student retention and exiting, as well as guidelines for parent appeals. | 5.0E Student placement data should be collected using an appropriate balance of quantitative and qualitative measures with adequate evidence of reliability and validity for the purposes of identification.<br>5.1E District guidelines and procedures should be reviewed and revised when necessary. |

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Source: Eric Clearinghouse on Disabilities and Gifted Education

# Adapted from **College Planning for Gifted Students, 2nd edition**

Sandra Berger

**Common Myths About Gifted Students**

- Gifted students are a homogeneous group, all high achievers.
- Gifted students do not need help. If they are really gifted, they can manage on their own.
- Gifted students have fewer problems than others because their intelligence and abilities somehow exempt them from the hassles of daily life.
- The future of a gifted student is assured: a world of opportunities lies before the student.
- Gifted students are self-directed; they know where they are heading.
- The social and emotional development of the gifted student is at the same level as his or her intellectual development.
- Gifted students are nerds and social isolates.
- The primary value of the gifted student lies in his or her brain power.
- The gifted student's family always prizes his or her abilities.
- Gifted students need to serve as examples to others and they should always assume extra responsibility.
- Gifted students make everyone else smarter.
- Gifted students can accomplish anything they put their minds to. All they have to do is apply themselves.
- Gifted students are naturally creative and do not need encouragement.
- Gifted children are easy to raise and a welcome addition to any classroom.

**Truths About Gifted Students**

- Gifted students are often perfectionistic and idealistic. They may equate achievement and grades with self-esteem and self-worth, which sometimes leads to fear of failure and interferes with achievement.
- Gifted students may experience heightened sensitivity to their own expectations and those of others, resulting in guilt over achievements or grades perceived to be low.
- Gifted students are asynchronous. Their chronological age, social, physical, emotional, and intellectual development may all be at different levels. For example, a 5-year-old may be able to read and comprehend a third-grade book but may not be able to write legibly.
- Some gifted children are "mappers" (sequential learners), while others are "leapers" (spatial learners). Leapers may not know how they got a "right answer." Mappers may get lost in the steps leading to the right answer.
- Gifted students may be so far ahead of their chronological age mates that they know more than half the curriculum before the school year begins! Their boredom can result in low achievement and grades.
- Gifted children are problem solvers. They benefit from working on open-ended, interdisciplinary problems; for example, how to solve a shortage of community resources. Gifted students often refuse to work for grades alone.
- Gifted students often think abstractly and with such complexity that they may need help with concrete study- and test-taking skills. They may not be able to select one answer in a multiple choice question because they see how all the answers might be correct.
- Gifted students who do well in school may define success as getting an "A" and failure as any grade less than an "A." By early adolescence they may be unwilling to try anything where they are not certain of guaranteed success.

# Some Myths About Gifted Children

***Gifted Kids are like cream that rises to the top in a classroom:***

Not necessarily. Gifted Children can have hidden learning disabilities that go undiscovered because they can easily compensate for them in the early years. As time goes on though, it becomes harder and harder for them to excel which can lead to behavior problems and depression.

***Gifted Kids are so smart they do fine with or without special programs:***

They may appear to do fine on their own. But without proper challenge they can become bored and unruly. As the years go by they may find it harder and harder as work does become more challenging, since they never faced challenge before.

***Gifted and*** Talented ***means the same thing:***

Again, not necessarily. There is no rule that states that a child who is capable of scoring to the high ninety percentiles on group achievement testing **must** be considered gifted. We must remember that achievement tests like the Metropolitan Achievement Tests are "Grade Level Testing". Such a child is most definitely Academically Talented. But further individualized IQ and out of level academic testing must be given before we can define that child as **"Gifted".** At the same time, there is no rule that states a child identified as gifted should be **Achieving** to high standards in the classroom. This type of stereotyping can do serious and irreversible damage to both groups. **ANY** child can benefit from enrichment. Academically Talented Children can benefit from Honors (Grade Level) Classes. Intellectually Gifted children need a differentiated curriculum and possibly even a different environment.

***They need to go through school with their own age mates:***

Where it's true that children need to play and interact socially with other children their age, they do not need to learn with them. Especially in the case of a highly gifted child who may have a chronological age of six and a mental age of 11 who has been reading since two. To put that child in a reading class with other six year olds who are just learning to read is sheer torture for that child.

***Giftedness is something to be jealous about:***

This is perhaps the most damaging myth. More often than not gifted children can feel isolated and misunderstood. They have more adult tastes in music, clothing, reading material and food. These differences to other children can cause them to be shunned and even abused verbally or physically by other children. Experts in the field of gifted education are beginning to address the higher incidences of ADHD and Spelling/Handwriting disabilities in the gifted population verses those in the much larger normal population.

**Myths & Realities about Gifted Learners**
http://www.4cagt.com/Other/Handbook.pdf

Myth: Everyone is gifted in some way.
**Reality: All individuals have gifts that make them unique, but giftedness refers to extraordinary, exceptional, beyond-the-norm abilities and talents.**

Myth: Gifted kids are smart enough to learn by themselves.
**Reality: Gifted children require the same professional educational and emotional support as other children, but that support must be appropriate to their needs.**

Myth: Special provisions for the gifted are undemocratic.
**Reality: In a democratic and egalitarian society that places high value on the worth of every individual, the public schools have an obligation to provide educational opportunities that will enable each student to develop fully according to his or her potential.**

Myth: Labeling a child as gifted leads to special treatment and special problems.
**Reality: Gifted education identifies academic needs of students whose abilities and knowledge exceed what is being taught in the regular classroom and meets those needs. When that happens, problems often disappear.**

Myth: Accelerating eager gifted learners sometimes causes them social or emotional harm.
**Reality: Research shows no connection between acceleration of content/grade and social or emotional problems for correctly identified children.**

Myth: Gifted learners with the same level of intelligence have the same abilities and interests.
**Reality: Gifted children, like all children, are unique individuals and differ in their abilities, talents, and personalities.**

Myth: Gifted learners are enthusiastic about school and academic work.
**Reality: Gifted learners may actually struggle in a school environment because of lack of challenge, a learning difficulty, or a different learning style.**

Myth: Gifted education and the "gifted" label are "elitist" because schools with gifted programs offer "special" treatment for smart kids that already have it all.
**Reality: Gifted education is, in fact, about meeting the academic and affective needs of students whose abilities and knowledge exceed what is being taught in the regular classroom.**

Myth: Gifted kids tend to be physically weak and unhealthy.
**Reality: Gifted children actually tend to be stronger, have fewer illnesses, and many are outstanding athletes.**

Myth: Gifted kids are emotionally unstable and social misfits.
**Reality: The opposite is generally true. Many children fail to be identified by teachers because their outward behavior seems so normal. They are often very outgoing and can be outstanding leaders.**

# Frequently Used Terms in Gifted Education

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| **Ability Grouping** | Class or group assignment based on observed behavior or performance. Ability grouping is not the same as tracking. |
| **Accelerated Learning** | A strategy of progressing through education at rates faster or ages younger than the norm. |
| **Accountability** | Holding students, teachers, administrators, and other school personnel responsible for instructional outcomes |
| **Advanced Placement (AP)** | A program developed by the College Board where high schools offer courses that meet criteria established by institutions of higher education. Â In many instances, college credit may be earned with the successful completion of an AP exam in specific content areas. (Note Individuals interested in policies related to earning college credit should contact the college or university of their choice for specifics.) |
| **Affective Curriculum** | Curriculum that focuses on person/social awareness and adjustment, and includes the study of values, attitudes, and self. |
| **Aptitude** | An inclination to excel in the performance of a certain skill. |
| **Asynchrony** | A term used to describe disparate rates of intellectual, emotional, and physical rates of growth or development often displayed by gifted children. |
| **At-Risk** | A term used to describe students whose economic, physical, emotional, or academic needs go unmet or serve as barriers to talent recognition or development, thus putting them in danger of underachieving or dropping out.. |
| **Authentic Assessment** | Evaluating student learning through the use of student portfolios, performance, or observations in place or in conjunction with more traditional measures of performance such as tests and written assignments. The process allows students to be evaluated using assessments that more closely resemble real world tasks, such as a scientific experiment to demonstrate understanding of the laws of motion. |
| **Bloom's Taxonomy** | Developed in 1956 by Benjamin Bloom, the taxonomy is often used to develop curriculum for gifted children. There are six levels within the taxonomy that move from basic to high levels of thinking. These include knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation.. |
| **Brainstorming** | Brainstorming is an activity used to generate many creative ideas that have no right or wrong answers and are accepted without criticism. Effective brainstorming is characterized by fluency and flexibility of thought. |
| **Cluster Grouping** | A grouping assignment for gifted students in the regular heterogeneous classroom. Typically, five or six gifted students with similar needs, abilities, or interests are clustered in the same classroom, which allows the teacher to more efficiently differentiate assignments for a group of advanced learners rather than just one or two students. |

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| **Concurrent or Dual Enrollment** | Most often refers to high school students taking college courses, often for college credit. Dual enrollment is viewed as providing high school students benefits such as greater access to a wider range of rigorous academic and technical courses, savings in time and money on a college degree, promoting efficiency of learning, and enhancing admission to and retention in college. The terms may also be used to refer to middle grade students taking high school courses and earning credit towards graduation. |
| **Cooperative Learning** | An instructional method that allows students to work in small groups within the classroom, often with a division of assignment of several specific tasks or roles. This group strategy allows students to practice working in a group and taking leadership roles. However, when gifted students participate in cooperative learning groups intentionally clustered by mixed ability students, special care must be taken to differentiate tasks appropriately. |
| **Creativity** | The process of developing new, uncommon, or unique ideas. The federal definition of giftedness identifies creativity as a specific component of giftedness. |
| **Criterion-Referenced Testing** | An assessment that compares a student's test performance to their mastery of a body of knowledge or specific skill rather than relating their scores to the performance of other students |
| **Curriculum Compacting** | After showing a level of proficiency in the basic curriculum, a student can then be allowed to exchange instructional time for other learning experiences. |
| **Differentiation** | Modifying curriculum and instruction according to content, pacing, and/or product to meet unique student needs in the classroom |
| **Enrichment** | Activities that add or go beyond the existing curriculum. Â Activities may occur in the classroom or in a separate setting. |
| **Flexible Grouping** | An instructional strategy where students are grouped together to receive appropriately challenging instruction. True flexible grouping permits students to move in and out of various grouping patterns, depending on the course content. Grouping can be determined by ability, size, and/or interest. |
| **Gifted and Talented Students** | The federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act defines gifted and talented students as "Students, children, or youth who give evidence of high achievement capability in areas such as intellectual, creative, artistic, or leadership capacity, or in specific academic fields, and who need services and activities not ordinarily provided by the school in order to fully develop those capabilities." • [Title IX, Part A, Definition 22. (2002)] Many states and districts follow the federal definition |
| **Heterogeneous Grouping** | Grouping students by mixed ability or readiness levels in a heterogeneous classroom is one in which a teacher is expected to meet a broad range of student needs or readiness levels |
| **Homogeneous** | Grouping students by need, ability, or interest. Although variations between |

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|---|---|
| **Grouping** | students exist in a homogeneous classroom, the intent of this grouping pattern is to restrict the range of student readiness or needs that a teacher must address. |
| **Independent Study** | A self-directed learning strategy where the teacher acts as guide or facilitator and the student plays a more active role in designing and managing his or her own learning. |
| **Individual Education Plan (IEP)** | An IEP is a document that delineates special education services for special-needs students. The IEP includes any modifications that are required in the regular classroom and any additional special programs or services. Â Federal law and the majority of states do not require IEPs for gifted learners.. |
| **Intelligence** | The ability to learn, reason, and problem solve. Debate revolves around the nature of intelligence as to whether it is an innate quality or something that is developed as a result of interacting with the environment. Many researchers believe that it is a combination of the two. |
| **Intelligence Quotient (IQ)** | A numerical representation of intelligence. IQ is derived from dividing mental age (result from an intelligence test) by the chronological age times 100. Traditionally, an average IQ is considered to be 100. |
| **International Baccalaureate (IB) Program** | A demanding pre-university program that students can complete to earn college credit. IB emphasizes critical thinking and understanding of other cultures or points of view. A diploma is awarded at the completion of the IB program which allows graduates access to universities worldwide. |
| **Learning Styles** | Preferred way(s) in which individuals interact or process new information across the three domains of learning identified in the taxonomy of education objectives: cognitive (knowledge), psychomotor (skills) and affective (attitude). An individual's preferred learning style is how he/she learns best. |
| **Magnet Schools** | A public school program that focuses on a specific learning area such as math, science, technology, or the performing arts. Magnet schools have been established to meet the specific learning needs of the gifted. |
| **Mentor** | A community member who shares his or her expertise with a student of similar career or field of study aspirations |
| **Norm-Referenced Testing** | An assessment that compares an individual's results with a large group of individuals who have taken the same assessment (who are referred to as the norming group). Examples include the SAT and Iowa Tests of Basic Skills. |
| **Parallel Curriculum Model** | A curriculum modification strategy to meet the needs of gifted students in terms of depth, complexity, and novelty. This model has four simultaneous pathways of development: Core or Basic Curriculum, Curriculum of Connections, Curriculum or Practice, and the Curriculum of Identify. |
| **Portfolio Assessment** | An alternative or supplement to traditional measures of giftedness, portfolios offer a collection of student work over time that can help to determine achievement and progress. Many of the elements found in portfolios cannot be captured by a standardized test. |

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| **Pull-out Program** | A program which takes a student out of the regular classroom during the school day for special programming. |
| **Rubric** | A rubric is a chart composed of criteria for evaluation and levels of fulfillment of those criteria. A rubric allows for standardized evaluation according to specified criteria, making grading simpler and more transparent. |
| **Social-Emotional Needs** | Gifted and talented students may have affective needs that include heightened or unusual sensitivity to self-awareness, emotions, and expectations of themselves or others, and a sense of justice, moral judgment, or altruism. Counselors working in this area may address issues such as perfectionism, depression, underachievement, or career planning. |
| **Talent Development** | Programs, curricula, and services for gifted and talented students that can best meet their needs, promote their achievements in life, and contribute to the enhancement of our society when schools identify students' specific talent strengths and focus educational services on these talents.. |
| **Telescope** | To cover the same amount of materials or activities in less time, thereby allowing more time for enrichment activities and projects that better suit the interests, needs, and readiness levels of gifted students. |
| **Tiered Assignments** | A differentiated instructional strategy in which all students work toward the same goal, but activities are geared toward each student's level of understanding. |
| **Twice Exceptional** | A term used to describe a student that is both gifted and disabled. These students may also be referred to as having dual exceptionalities or as being GT/LD. |
| **Underachieving or Underachievement** | A term used to describe the discrepancy between a student's performance and their potential, or ability to perform at a much higher level. |

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